

How Does ONS Determine Its Positions on Legislative or Regulatory Matters?

ONS often is asked by elected officials, ONS members, advocacy partners, and others to review and determine its position on numerous legislative and regulatory proposals – both at the federal and state levels. When such a request is put forward to ONS, the Society undertakes a formal process by which it determines its position. The following factors are taken into consideration when ONS reviews public policy proposals: ONS mission, goals, and objectives; ONS policy positions; the ONS health policy agenda priorities for the current year; and the role that ONS and oncology nurses play in the particular issue or policy.

If ONS is asked about a legislative or regulatory proposal that the Society previously has supported or opposed, then that position usually is sustained, unless the applicable ONS policy, position statement, or some other significant factor has changed in the interim. If it is an issue or policy proposal that the Society has not previously taken a position on, then the proposal is reviewed and analyzed by the ONS Board of Directors with counsel from the ONS Health Policy Associate – taking the above mentioned factors into consideration. Priority is given to legislation or regulation that addresses needs of the entire population of people with cancer versus a very specific population such as a cancer site specific population. If a legislative or regulatory proposal is consistent with ONS mission, positions, and policy and aligned with ONS health policy priorities then ONS typically endorses the proposal and/or lends its support. If a legislative or regulatory proposal is inconsistent with – or in direct opposition to – ONS mission, positions and policy, then ONS either takes a “neutral” position – meaning the Society neither supports nor opposes the proposal, or in some cases, takes a position in active opposition to the legislative or regulatory policy. In some cases, ONS is asked for its position on an issue or matter for which it has not yet established a position or developed a policy statement. In these cases, ONS either stays neutral because of a lack of a position or determines that it must develop a position statement on the matter (in which case the ONS Board of Directors identifies ONS leaders to work on a position statement to be presented to the Board for its consideration).

Each year hundreds of bills related to cancer, nursing, Medicare, Medicaid, and other health care issues are introduced in the U.S. Congress and ONS is asked to support many of them. Each federal legislative proposal that ONS is asked to support is reviewed and analyzed utilizing process explained above. View a [chart of the current federal legislative proposals that ONS has endorsed](#) for the 2nd Session of the 111th Congress (2010).

View current [ONS position statements](#).

Should ONS members have questions about any ONS positions or legislative or regulatory advocacy efforts, please contact ONS by sending an email to: government.relations@ons.org.